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three of his comrades, pupils like himself of the Conservatoire, Marras, Manzi, and Perugini, and the work was executed at the little theatre of that establishment, the commencement of the year 1825. The enthusiastic reception that he received from the familiar audience, assembled to judge of his efforts was wholly flattering to the young composer, but it did not prevent his writing later on the last leaf of the score: *Fine del dramma, alias pasticcione*. The first work of an artist, always important, especially in the case of a musician, can scarcely be, in fact, more than an imitation more or less skillful, more or less disguised; Bellini recognized this himself, but nevertheless in this *imitation*, as he styled it, he distinguished, it seems, some pieces of real value, as he took from this opera later two pieces, which he transferred to those works upon which he has devoted the most labor, one, — *Oh! quante volle, Oh! quante!* — the other, *Meco tu vieni, o misera!* — from the *Straniera*. One of his biographers, in speaking of this little work, says that he recognized in Bellini, "those great qualities that labor and composition developed in him later; at least the precious germs of those qualities, the imagination which creates melodies, and the sensibility which make them expressive."

The success of this debut, made almost in private, seemed to open a fine career to Bellini, and the old Zingarelli, embracing him with tenderness, predicted for him a brilliant future. In fact, a second success attended him a short time after, which gave him unexpected results, and Bellini could call himself, from the commencement of his artistic life, the spoilt child of Fortune, by whom he saw him favored in an extraordinary manner, and who seemed to take him by the hand, removing from his path every obstacle.

There existed at this time in Naples an excellent custom, which unfortunately has not become general, and which consisted in this. The most advanced of the young *maestrini* of the Royal College of Music, received, a short time before their leaving that establishment, the words of a cantata, to set to music, which was destined for the San Carlo Theatre, to be executed the next *gran-gala* day, that is one of those days on which they celebrated the fête or birthday of some one of the members of the Royal Family. That was then an occasion of extraordinary solemnity, and one can easily imagine that the young artist called to direct the execution of a new work before a public composed of the Sovereign and his family of the court, functionaries of every rank, and of the most brilliant society, in a magnificent hall, splendidly lighted, resplendent with gildings, and filled with dazzling toilettes, one can conceive that the young artist, with the little success that he obtained at this time, found himself well launched, and could face the future without great trepidation.

At this time happened in the life of Bellini a love incident, a little sentimental romance abruptly arrested in its flight, interrupted almost as soon as commenced. Bellini, it is well known, was spoilt by the women as well as by Fortune, and, at this period of his life, he inspired a veritable passion, very natural, if one considers the portrait traced of him at that time, by one of his biographers: "Affable, honest, sincere, modest, benevolent, affectionate, and very far from the meanesses of character which so often spoilt the merit of the greatest artists, Bellini had, in addition, received from nature the happiest gifts: a distinguished physiognomy, noble and regular

features, abundant light hair, — a peculiarity very rare in Central Italy — great limpid blue eyes, the mirror of his lovely soul."

He fell in love with a charming young girl, whose family were in easy circumstances, named Maddalena Fumaroli, and who responded to the sentiment which she had inspired in his heart. In accordance with his sweetheart, Bellini presented himself to the parents of the young person, and resolutely demanded her hand. The parents unfortunately could not foresee the future reserved for this artist, yesterday sitting upon the benches of a schoolroom, and they replied that they could not give their daughter to a *maestro* whose position was far from being made, and obstinately repulsed his demand. Neither his prayers, or the tears of their child, could move them, and Bellini was obliged to retire without any hope, his heart broken by sorrow.

[To be continued.]

A FRIEND of ours in this town has an album, in which will be found recorded the autographs of many local celebrities. He is a most persistent fellow, and the moment he observes any announcement of any *artistes* visiting here, he is sure to pounce upon them with his everlasting album. The last attack was made on Mr. Howard Paul, who gave his entertainment here a few nights since. Whether this gentleman objects to figuring in rural volumes of this sort, or is a "bit of a wag," we cannot precisely determine. Perhaps either consideration has something to do with the following, which appears in the book of the Stockport collector:



"The compass of my voice and the trill, I beg to say, is no great shakes.

HOWARD PAUL."

If all of the vocalists applied to were to inscribe a bagatelle of similar point, the album, in time would be worth turning over on a winter's evening. — *Stockport Free Press*.

LA BIEN AIMEE.

I laid me down upon a grassy bank,  
Thick jewelled o'er with many a Summer flower,  
While down along the river, tall and dank  
Waved the sad rushes as with gentle power;  
The west wind played along the yielding rank,  
And on the air the hum of insects borne  
Made musical the dewy Summer morn.

There, as the sun crept up into the sky,  
And all the earth looked sweet and fresh, I lay  
And thought of many an hour in days gone by,  
When life was young, and I was free and gay,  
And looked upon the world with laughing eye;  
When o'er my vision did the shadow come  
Of her, the lost, yet still beloved, one.

A winsome maid, with eye of purest blue,  
And auburn ringlets rolling down her face,  
Which, when the sun played on them, bore a hue  
That gave her smile a sweeter, fairer grace,  
While on her lips there hung the fragrant dew  
Of honied kisses, lying there in wait —  
So many priceless gems immaculate?

And then I thought upon those happy days,  
When, hand in hand, we mingled with the throng,

And all was covered with a rosy haze,  
And all our life was but a merry song;  
The young blood coursing through our veins,  
Ablaze  
With youthful passion and with love, made fly  
The golden hours leading to destiny.

Ah happy hours, now gone alas for aye,  
Why did ye fill me with a maddening joy,  
The very thought, of which, until this day,  
My brightest moments will with grief destroy  
While tear drops rise, subdue them as I may?  
For she is gone, my sunshine and my light,  
And all my day is turned to endless night.

Anon there came before my eyes a cloud,  
And he, my rival, with a sneering smile,  
Stood by her side with mien and aspect proud,  
While she confiding pressed his arm the while,  
Then looked on me, and coldly, proudly bowed!  
Oh it was maddening to think that she  
Could smile on him, and coldly bow to me!

Then through the air there came an angel song,  
And up into the blue and cloudless sky,  
An angel's wings, I saw her borne along,  
While tender music welcomed her on high:  
And these the words echoed by the throng:  
"When life is done, and all its troubles o'er,  
"You'll meet on high to be beloved once more."

PALETTA.

## LIVES OF THE EARLY PAINTERS.

BY MRS. JAMESON.

MASACCIO.

It is easily conceivable that, during the forty years which Lorenzo Ghiberti devoted to his great work, and others on which he was employed at intervals, the assistance he required in completing his own designs, in drawing, modelling, casting, polishing, should have formed around him a school of young artists who worked and studied under his eye. The kind of work on which they were employed gave these young men great superiority in the knowledge of the human form, and in effects of relief, light and shade, &c. The application of the sciences of anatomy, mathematics, and geometry, to the arts of design, began to be more fully understood. This early school of painters was favorably distinguished above the latter schools of Italy by a generous feeling of mutual aid, emulation, and admiration, among the youthful students, far removed from the detestable jealousies, the stabbings, poisonings, and conspiracies, which we read of in the seventeenth century. Among those who frequented the atelier of Lorenzo were Paolo Uccello, the first who applied geometry to the study of perspective: he attached himself to this pursuit with such unwearied assiduity, that it had nearly turned his brain, and that of Brunelleschi that Manetti, one of the earliest Greek scholars and mathematicians in modern Europe, translated the "Elements of Euclid;" Maso Finiguerra, who invented the art of engraving on copper; Pollajuolo, the first painter who

studied anatomy by dissection, and who became the instructor of Michael Angelo; and Masolino, who had been educated under Starnina, the best colorist of that time.

There was also a young boy, scarcely in his teens, who learned to draw and model by studying the works of Ghiberti, and who, though not considered as his disciple, after a while left all the regular pupils far behind him. He had come from a little village about eighteen miles from Florence, called San Giovanni, and of his parentage and early years little is recorded, and that little doubtful. His name was properly Tommaso Guido, or, from the place of his birth, Maso di San Giovanni; but from his abstracted air, his utter indifference to the usual sports and pursuits of boyhood, his negligent dress and manners, his companions called him *Masaccio*, which might be translated *ugly* or *stoutly Tom*; and by this reproachful nickname one of the most illustrious of painters is now known throughout the world and to all succeeding generations. Masaccio was one of those rare and remarkable men whose vocation is determined beyond recall almost from infancy. He made his first essays as a child in his native village; and in the house in which he was born they long preserved the effigy of an old woman spinning, which he had painted when a mere boy on the wall of his chamber, astonishing for its life-like truth. Coming to Florence when about thirteen, he studied (according to Vasari) under Masolino, who was then employed on the frescoes of the chapel of the Brancacci family, in the church of the Carmelites. Masolino died soon after, leaving his work unfinished; but Masaccio still continued his studies, acquiring the principles of design under Ghiberti and Donatello, and the art of perspective under Brunelleschi. The passionate energy, and forgetfulness of all the common interests and pleasures of life, with which he pursued his favorite art, obtained him, at an early age, the notice of Cosmo de' Medici. Then intervened the civil troubles of the republic. Cosmo was banished; and Masaccio left Florence to pursue his studies at Rome with the same ardor, and with all the advantages afforded by the remains of ancient art collected there.

While at Rome, Masaccio painted in the church of San Clemente a Crucifixion, and some scenes from the life of St. Catherine of Alexandria; but, unhappily, these have been so coarsely painted over, that every vestige of Masaccio's hand has disappeared—only the composition remains; and from the engravings which exist some idea may be formed of their beauty and simplicity.

Cosmo de' Medici was recalled from banishment in 1433; and soon afterwards, probably through his patronage and influence, the completion of the chapel in the church of the Carmine, left unfinished by Masolino, was intrusted to Masaccio.

This chapel is on the right hand as you enter the church. It is in the form of a parallelogram, and three sides are covered with the frescoes, divided into twelve compartments, of which four are large and oblong, and the rest narrow and upright. All represent scenes from the life of St. Peter, except two, which are immediately on each side as you enter—the Fall, and the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Of the twelve compartments, two had been painted by Masolino previous to 1415: the Preaching of St. Peter, one of the small compartments, and the St. Peter and St. John healing the Cripple, one of the largest. In this fresco are introduced two beautiful youths, or pages, in the dress of the patricians of Flor-

ence. Nothing can be more unaffectedly elegant. They would make us regret that the death of Masolino left another to complete his undertaking, had not that other been MASACCIO.

Six of the compartments, two large and four small ones, were executed by Masaccio. These represent the Tribute Money; St. Peter raising a Youth to Life; Peter Baptizing the Converts; Peter and John healing the Sick and Lame; the same Apostles distributing Alms; and the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

The scene represented in one of the compartments is one of the incidents in the apocryphal History of the Apostles. Simon the Magician challenged Peter and Paul to restore to life a dead youth, who is said to have been a kinsman or nephew of the Roman emperor. The sorcerer fails, of course. The Apostles resuscitate the youth, who kneels before them. The skull and bones near him represent the previous state of death. A crowd of spectators stand around beholding the miracle. All the figures are half the size of life, and quite wonderful for the truth of expression, the variety of character, the simple dignity of the forms and attitudes. Masaccio died while at work on this grand picture, and the central group was painted some years later by Filippino Lippi. The figure of the youth in the centre is traditionally said to be that of the painter Granacci, then a boy. Among the figures standing round are several contemporary portraits: Piero Guicciardini, rather of the great historian; Luigi Pulci, the poet, author of the "*Morgante Maggior*;" Pollajuolo, the painter, Michael Angelo's master and others.

The portrait of Masaccio usually given is from the head introduced into the fresco of the two Apostles before Nero—the finest of all, and the chief-d'œuvre of the painter. It appears that the grand figure of St. Paul standing before the Prison of St. Peter, which Raphael transferred with little alteration into his Cartoon of St. Paul preaching at Athens, is now attributed to Filippino Lippi. The four remaining compartments were added many years later (about 1470), by the same Filippino Lippi, who seems to have been inspired by the greatness of his predecessors.

But to return to Masaccio. In considering his works, their superiority over all that painting had till then achieved or attempted is such, and so surprising, that there seems a kind of break in the progression of the art—as if Masaccio had overleaped suddenly the limits which his predecessors had found impassable; but Ghiberti and his Gates explain the seeming wonder. The chief excellences of Masaccio were those which he had attained, or at least conceived, in his early studies in modeling. He had learned from Ghiberti not merely the knowledge of form, but the effects of light and shade in giving relief and roundness to his figures, which, in comparison to those of his predecessors, seemed to start from the canvas. He was the first who successfully foreshortened the extremities. In most of the older pictures the figures appeared to stand on the points of their toes (as in the Angel of Orcagna); the foreshortening of the foot, though often attempted with more or less success, seemed to present insurmountable difficulties. Masaccio added a precision in the drawing of the naked figure, and a softness and harmony in coloring the flesh, never attained before his time, nor since surpassed till the days of Raphael and Titian. He excelled also in the expression and imitation of natural actions and feelings. In the fresco of St. Peter baptizing the

Converts there is a youth who has just thrown off his garment, and stands in the attitude of one shivering with sudden cold. "This figure," says Lanzi, "formed an epoch in art." Add the animation and variety of character in his heads—so that it was said of him that he painted souls as well as bodies—and his free flowing draperies, quite different from the longitudinal folds of the Giotto school, yet grand and simple, and we can form some idea of the combination of excellence with novelty of style which astonished his contemporaries. The Chapel of the Brancacci was for half a century what the Caffere of Raphael in the Vatican have since become—a school for young artists. Vasari enumerates by name twenty painters who were accustomed to study there; among them, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolomeo, Perugino, Baccio Bandinelli, and the divine Raphael himself. Nothing less than first-rate genius ever yet inspired genius; and the Chapel of the Brancacci has been rendered as sacred and memorable by its association with such spirits, as it is precious and wondrous as a monument of art:

"In this Chapel wrought

One of the Few, Nature's interpreters;  
The Few, whom Genius gives as lights to shine—  
Masaccio; and he slumbers underneath.  
Wouldst thou behold his monument? Look round,  
And know that where we stand stood oft and long,  
Oft till the day was gone, Raphael himself,  
He and his haughty rival\*—patiently,

\* Michael Angelo.

Humbly, to learn of those who came before,  
To steal a spark of their authentic fire,  
Theirs who first broke the universal gloom—  
Sons of the morning!"—Rogers.

It is strange that so little should be known of Masaccio's history—that he should have passed through life so little noted, so little thought of: scarce any record remaining of him but his works, and those so few, and yet so magnificent, that one of his heads alone would have been sufficient to immortalize him, and to justify the enthusiasm of his compeers in art. We are told that he died suddenly, so suddenly that there were suspicions of poison; and that he was buried within the precincts of the chapel he had adorned, but without tomb or inscription. There is not a more vexed question in biography than the date of Masaccio's birth and death. According to Rosini, the most accurate of modern writers on art, he was born in 1417, and died in 1443, at the age of twenty-six. Vasari also says expressly that he died before he was twenty-seven; in that case he could not have been, as the same writer represents him, the pupil of Masolino, who died in 1415. According to other authorities, he was born in 1401, and died at the age of forty-two. It seems most probable that, if he had lived to such a mature age, something more would have been known of his life and habits, and he would have left more behind him. His death at the age of twenty-six renders clear and credible many facts and dates otherwise inexplicable; and as to his early attainment of the most wonderful skill in art, we may recollect several other examples of precocious excellence; for instance, Ghiberti, already mentioned, and Raphael, who was called to Rome to paint the Vatican in his twenty-seventh year. The head of Masaccio, painted by himself, in the Chapel of the Brancacci, at most two years before his death, represents him as a young man apparently about four or five and twenty.